United Nations A/S-24/PV.10 (Resumption 1)

General Assembly

Twenty-fourth special session

Official Records

10th meeting

Saturday, 1 July 2000, 3 p.m.

New York

President: Mr. Gurirab ..... (Namibia)

The meeting was suspended on 30 June at 7.20 p.m. and resumed at 3.15 p.m. on 1 July.

Agenda item 8 (*continued*)

Proposals for further initiatives for social development

(b) Proposals for further initiatives for the full implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development

Report of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the Twenty-fourth Special Session (A/S-24/8)

Agenda item 9

Adoption of the final documents

The President: For the text of the report, delegates should see documents A/S-24/AC.1/L.2 and Adds.1 to 16 as well as document A/S-24/AC.1/L.3.

Before we proceed further, I would like to inform members of a technical error in the Arabic, English and Spanish versions of document A/S-24/AC.1/L.3. The document symbol cited at the end of the last paragraph should read A/S-24/AC.1/L.2/Adds.1 to 16.

I now request His Excellency Mr. Bagher Asadi of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Vice-Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the Twenty-fourth Special Session, acting as Rapporteur, to introduce the report.

Mr. Asadi (Islamic Republic of Iran): I have the honour to present the report of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the Twenty-fourth Special Session, which is contained in the following documents: A/S-24/8; A/S-24/AC.1/L.2 and Adds.1 to 16; and A/S-24/AC.1/L.3.

The Ad Hoc Committee held a number of informal consultations with a view to finalizing a document for consideration by the special session under agenda item 8. I would like to take this opportunity to update the report by adding information from our last formal meeting, which is not included in the printed texts before us.

In document A/S-24/AC.1/L.2, the beginning of the second paragraph should read: "The Ad Hoc Committee held five meetings on 26 and 27 June and 1 July 2000". The rest of the sentence continues as is.

In the third paragraph, the first blank should be filled in with the word "fourth", the second blank before the word "June" should be filled in with the number "30" and the third blank should be filled in with the name "Mr. Kheireddine Ramoul (Algeria)".

In the last paragraph, before the section entitled "Recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee", the first line should read: "At the 5th meeting, on 1 July 2000". The rest of the sentence continues as is.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

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The following text should be added after that last paragraph:

> "At its 5th meeting, on 1 July, the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole also considered its draft report (A/S-24/AC.1/L.2 and Adds.1 to 16) and a draft resolution submitted by the Chairman in document A/S-24/AC.1/L.3. Statements were made by the representatives of the Syrian Arab Republic, Egypt, Pakistan, the Sudan, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Algeria, Cuba, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Canada, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Qatar, Iraq, France (on behalf of the European Union), the United States, Morocco, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Jordan, Nigeria (on behalf of the Group of 77 and China), Jamaica, Oman, Egypt, Senegal, Mauritania, Bahrain, Bangladesh, South Africa, Azerbaijan, Viet Nam, Malaysia, China, Tunisia, Ethiopia and Indonesia and by the observer for Palestine."

Also, the following changes should be made to Part I of the report, document A/S-24/2/Add.2, which contains the Political Declaration. The entire text of paragraph 5 should now read as follows:

> "We therefore reiterate our determination and duty to eradicate poverty, promote full and productive employment, foster social integration and create an enabling environment for social development. The maintenance of peace and security within and among nations, democracy, the rule of law, the promotion and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development, effective, transparent and accountable governance, gender equality, full respect for fundamental principles and rights at work and the rights of migrant workers are some of the essential elements for the realization of social and people-centred sustainable development. Social development requires not only economic activity, but also reduction in the inequality in the distribution of wealth and more equitable distribution of the benefits of economic growth within and among nations, including, inter alia, realization of an open, equitable, secure, non-discriminatory, predictable, transparent and multilateral rule-based international trading system, maximizing opportunities and guaranteeing social justice, recognizing the interrelationship between social development and economic growth."

In paragraph 6, the fourth sentence should read as follows:

> "We also invite them to develop coordinated and gender-sensitive social, economic and environmental approaches in order to close the gap between goals and achievements."

In paragraph 6 bis, the fourth sentence of the paragraph, beginning with the words "The debt problems of low and middle-income developing countries", and the fifth sentence of the paragraph, beginning with the words "The full financing and implementation", should be deleted, and the brackets around the paragraph should be removed.

In paragraph 7 bis, the brackets around the words "natural disasters" should be removed, and those words should be incorporated into the text of the paragraph.

In paragraph 9 the second sentence should read as follows:

> "We recognize the need to continue to work on a wide range of reforms for a strengthened and more stable international financial system, enabling it to deal more effectively and in a timely manner with new challenges of development."

The brackets around paragraph 9 should be removed.

In paragraph 10 the second sentence should read as follows:

> "At the dawn of the new millennium, aware of our responsibilities towards future generations, we are strongly committed to social development, including social justice, for all in a globalizing world."

Finally, the following changes should be made to document A/S-24/2/Add.2 (Part III).

Paragraph 1 bis should read as follows:

> "Governments, while designing and implementing their development policies, should ensure that people are placed at the centre of development. Therefore, people must have the right and the ability to participate fully in the social, economic and political life of their societies. Our global drive for social development and the recommendations for action contained in this document are made in a spirit of consensus and international cooperation, in full conformity

with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, recognizing that the formulation and implementation of strategies, policies, programmes and actions for social development are the responsibility of each country and should take into account the economic, social and environmental diversity of conditions in each country, with full respect for the various religious and ethical values, cultural backgrounds and philosophical convictions of its people, and in conformity with all human rights and fundamental freedoms. In this context, international cooperation is essential for the full implementation of social development programmes and actions."

In paragraph 18 the words "and that are incompatible with the dignity and worth of the human person and must be combated and eliminated" should be added at the end of the paragraph.

Paragraph 69 should be deleted.

Finally, the following correction should be made to the first sentence of paragraph 112 (b) bis. The words "low and" should be inserted between the words "problems of" and "middle-income developing countries". The beginning of the sentence should therefore read as follows:

"Calling for concerted national and international action to address effectively debt problems of low and middle income developing countries."

That is the end of the corrections, and the end of the Rapporteur's report.

The President: If there is no proposal under rule 66 of the rules of procedure, I shall take it that the Assembly will not discuss the report.

It was so decided.

The President: Statements will therefore be limited to explanations of vote. The positions of delegations regarding the recommendation of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the Twenty-fourth Special Session of the General Assembly have been made clear in the Committee.

May I remind delegations that, in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

I now give the floor to the representative of Gabon, who I presume will speak on behalf of the Group of African States.

Mr. Dangue Réwaka (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): As you have said, Mr. President, I am speaking on behalf of the New York Group of African States. Because of the cultural and linguistic diversity on the African continent, you will not be surprised that the statement I am going to read is in another language than the working language used in Gabon.

(*spoke in English*)

Allow me, at the outset, to thank you, Mr. President and delegates, on behalf of the African Group in New York, for giving me an opportunity to make a statement on behalf of the African States at the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly. Having been given this opportunity, I would be remiss if I failed to extend due appreciation and gratitude to the Government of Switzerland for hosting the special session and for warmly having received all of us here in the beautiful city of Geneva. I would especially like to thank that Government for its generous contributions, which facilitated the participation of all least developed countries.

This aside, the statement of the African States, which I am honoured to make on their behalf, is by no means an indication that African States are not joining the consensus of the conclusions of this important conference. Rather, it is a reaffirmation that first and foremost the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action, adopted in 1995, remain all the more relevant in accelerating Africa's economic, social and human resource development. It is also a reaffirmation of the fact that Africa remains committed to developing effective partnerships for social development by continuing to collaborate and work with civil society, the private sector and all its cooperating partners in the implementation of policies aimed at promoting private sector development and strengthening capacity-building in the public sector; and that Africa's central objective in advancing its human and socio-economic development agenda includes the eradication of poverty, creating and sustaining productive employment and income-generating programmes, enhancing social integration and national cohesion, promoting peace and stability and accelerating the democratization process. It also includes the promotion of respect of human rights and the rule of law, the

fostering of popular participation and the adoption of principles of transparent and accountable governance, in conformity with the cultural values of the continent.

Africa has demonstrated evidence of progress in attaining some of the goals and aspirations of the Copenhagen Declaration, yet those efforts are overshadowed by constraining socio-economic factors such as worsening poverty, inadequate national and international resources resulting from the continuing decline in official development assistance, the external debt burden, inadequate economic and social infrastructures, the impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, natural disasters, and incessant and protracted social instability and civil strife in several countries.

These are further compounded by the twin challenges of globalization and liberalization. While there is no denying that globalization creates opportunities, this new phenomenon, however promising, poses major challenges for Africa, in particular the least developed countries.

African States call upon the international community to act now in assisting them to overcome those obstacles which continue to prevent their economies from fully integrating in the global economy and thereby receiving all the benefits and opportunities offered to all States. African States also call upon the international community to endorse and give concrete support to the creation of an international solidarity and poverty reduction fund.

African States acknowledge the fact that the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative is a positive step towards a solution for unsustainable debt, and, although they are disappointed by the extent of debt relief and by the pace of its implementation, they are convinced that the new HIPC Initiative will seek to deliver deeper, broader and faster debt reduction or cancellation procedures to them, in particular to the least developed countries.

Africa's development partners should take due account of the fact that basing the reduction of official development assistance solely on the analysis of economic indicators can only imperil Africa's social gains and its vision for sustainable development.

African States are also aware of their responsibilities and take this opportunity to renew their commitment to social development and to pledge to intensify the implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action and further initiatives. They further commit themselves to intensify efforts to deepen the ongoing economic reforms, with a view to ensuring and maintaining economic growth and development levels that foster poverty reduction.

While hoping that the new commitments made during this special session will be translated into concrete measures, African States endorse the conclusions of the conference and pledge their full commitment to implementing the recommendations arising therefrom in partnership with the international community.

The President: The Assembly will now proceed to take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole, contained in document A/S-24/AC.1/L.3.

The draft resolution is entitled "Proposals for further initiatives for social development". The text of the annex to the draft resolution is contained, for the time being, in document A/S-24/2/Add.2, parts I to III, as amended by documents A/S-24/2/AC.1/L.2/Add.1 through A/S-24/AC.1/L.2/Add.16.

The draft resolution was recommended for adoption by the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole. May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt the draft resolution?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution S-24/2).

The President: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in explanation of position on the resolution just adopted.

Mr. Luck (Australia): My delegation has asked for the floor to record its views on two particular aspects of the text just adopted. In particular, Australia expresses its understanding of paragraph 65, dealing with Commitment 4 and referring to support for international drug control activities.

The Political Declaration of the special session on the world drug problem reaffirms

> "our unwavering determination and commitment to overcoming the world drug problem through domestic and international strategies to reduce both the illicit supply of and the demand for drugs" (*A/RES/S-20/2, para. 1*).

In keeping with this agreement, it is our understanding that paragraph 65 reflects the global community's commitment to reducing the supply of illicit narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.

In my delegation's view, adding the word "illicit" before "narcotic drugs" would more accurately have reflected the intent of this special session and been consistent with the purposes of the relevant conventions, which is to ensure that narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances continue to be available for legitimate medical and scientific purposes while efforts are made to minimize diversion to the illicit market.

The International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) Annual Report for 1999 notes

> "the consensus among all Governments that the medical use of narcotic drugs continues to be indispensable for the relief of pain and suffering and that adequate provision must be made to ensure the availability of narcotic drugs for such purposes." (*E/INCB/1999/1, chap. I, para. 1*)

The INCB Report also notes that in many countries, particularly developing nations, there are inadequate supplies of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances available to meet legitimate medical requirements. Australia, as one of the world's major producers of licit opiates, would like to ensure, in accordance with the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961, that opiates continue to be available for medical and scientific needs.

On another matter, may I say briefly that while we welcome all efforts to embrace best practice and share expertise, Australia was somewhat disappointed that paragraph 7 of Part III, dealing with Commitment 1, did not more explicitly recognize the need for dialogue with all interested international organizations in the area of developing good practices in social policy. In particular, we feel that the United Nations system and the Bretton Woods institutions should be involved. We are concerned that without their involvement there may be duplication of ongoing work by these organizations and we urge all who will be involved in this process to ensure that the valuable contribution of such bodies is not ignored.

Australia firmly believes that the ideas we have developed at this Summit must be pursued in a spirit of partnership involving the contributions of States, the United Nations system, international financial institutions, communities and individuals.

Finally, since I have the floor, I take this opportunity briefly to express my delegation's satisfaction that a consensus outcome has been achieved at this special session and our gratitude to those, especially members of the Secretariat, who have facilitated our work.

The President: I call on the representative of Iraq.

Mr. Al-Humaimidi (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation would like to express its full appreciation for your efforts, Mr. President, in steering the work of this session to success. Through you, Sir, we wish to thank all those who participated in this collective effort, particularly the Chair of the Committee of the Whole and the Chairs of the Working Groups, the Coordinators, the Secretariat and all those who worked behind the scenes, translating documents, interpreting and providing other services at all hours. From the beginning of this session, my delegation participated at all levels in the preparatory work for the session. My delegation has demonstrated utmost flexibility throughout the consultations to allow us to arrive at success and consensus and to adopt the document. This is why the Government of Iraq will work to ensure compliance with this document and to ensure that it is implemented in accordance with our country's Constitution and our national legislation and regulations.

The President: I call on the representative of the United States.

Mr. Moose (United States of America): May I first extend my warmest congratulations to you, Mr. President, to our three Working Group Chairmen and to our facilitators for the heroic efforts in guiding the work of this conference and bringing it to a successful conclusion. I also wish to express my appreciation to our Swiss hosts for their hospitality, and especially to the hard-working men and women of the United Nations Secretariat for the magnificent job that they have done to keep things moving smoothly.

The United States is pleased to join the consensus in adopting the outcome document for this conference. I believe it represents an important milestone in the effort we all began five years ago in Copenhagen to put social development at the top of the international

agenda and in each of our countries. We have strongly reaffirmed the ten commitments contained in the Copenhagen Declaration and have agreed on an ambitious but achievable programme of work to bring them to full realization in the years ahead.

In the call for further actions and initiatives, one of the areas in which we have made important progress was Commitment 3. We recognize the major step that was taken through the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and agree to build on that historic agreement through further steps by Governments and the private sector. These steps will help us ensure that we break the vicious cycles of child and forced labour, end discrimination in employment and guarantee workers the right to participate in the decisions that affect their economic lives. We decided on a range of measures to promote opportunities for productive employment for people everywhere, recognizing that decent work is the surest way out of poverty. And we called for steps to help prepare all our citizens for the rapidly changing labour markets by improving access to new technologies and lifelong learning.

For the record, I must clarify United States policy in three particular areas.

First, in the area of debt relief, we believe that international efforts must concentrate on successful implementation of the enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative. We are concerned that paragraph 5 bis of the outcome document takes us well outside the framework of that Initiative and thus risks dissipating our efforts. For this reason, the United States must dissociate itself from the consensus on that particular paragraph, just as we did on a similar paragraph in the Beijing + 5 document.

Secondly, we would have preferred to retain the language as originally agreed in paragraph 18.

Finally, with respect to paragraph 38, I wish to stress that ratification of all treaties and conventions by the United States is the prerogative of the United States Senate under our advice and consent procedure. Thus, it would be inappropriate for the Executive Branch to do more than consider ratification of treaties or conventions, and it is in this sense that we interpret the commitment we have made under paragraph 38.

The President: I call on the representative of Costa Rica.

Mr. Penrod (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me at the outset to congratulate you, Mr. President, on the manner in which you have conducted our business and also congratulate the Chairmen of the Working Groups and all those who have worked to ensure that this special session has been crowned with success.

I have asked to speak because my country wishes to place on record that the Republic of Costa Rica would like to make clear that in those paragraphs of the document we have just adopted where reference is made to universal access to health care and services, it should not be understood that this includes abortion.

The President: I call on the representative of Malta.

Mr. Pace (Malta): In joining consensus on the final document of the special session of the General Assembly on the theme "World Summit for Social Development and beyond: achieving social development for all in a globalized world", the delegation of Malta would like to reaffirm its reservations made to the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action on the use of such terms as "reproductive health/services" and "sexual health/services". The interpretation given by Malta is consistent with its national legislation, which considers the termination of pregnancy through induced abortion to be illegal.

The delegation of Malta further reaffirms that it reserves its position on those parts of the document wherein reference is made to the outcome documents of particular conferences; in this respect, the delegation of Malta reaffirms its reservations as contained in the reports of the respective conferences.

Furthermore, the delegation of Malta reserves its position on the reference to various international instruments wherever these appear in the outcome document, consistent with its previous acceptance or non-acceptance of those instruments.

Mr. Hynes (Canada): I have the honour to make this statement on behalf of the delegations of Norway and of my own delegation, that of Canada. Let me begin, Mr. President, by congratulating you and Ambassador Cristián Maquieira, Chairman of the Preparatory Committee for this session, and his colleagues in the Bureau and in the Secretariat, on the skill and dedication you have demonstrated in leading

this special session to a successful conclusion. Our hosts — the people and the authorities of Switzerland — equally deserve our special appreciation for their outstanding arrangements and for the hospitality they have accorded to us all.

Five years ago, Norway and Canada participated enthusiastically in the first World Summit for Social Development. That was a historic event at which the world community adopted a comprehensive Programme of Action to combat poverty, to promote full and productive employment, and to foster social justice for all.

Today, our delegations are pleased to join in the adoption of this final document on the five-year review of progress achieved in implementing the Copenhagen Programme of Action. One major accomplishment since Copenhagen, which we have recognized and reinforced, has been the adoption by the International Labour Organization (ILO) of the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. We have also spent a good deal of time discussing the importance of effective coordination by all key organizations in the multilateral system in developing and implementing more coherent approaches to the pursuit of social development in all its aspects.

In the view of Norway and Canada, there is considerable scope for further efforts to that end, and we strongly encourage the heads of all relevant agencies, working within their respective mandates, to give highest priority to developing more coherent policy approaches and well-coordinated programme activities.

I also want to express Norway's and Canada's particular satisfaction at the consensus that has been reached on paragraph 111 (e) (bis) of our final document, mandating the initiation of a thorough study on specific proposals for developing new sources of funding for social development and poverty-eradication programmes. Canada and Norway are confident that this mandate will afford a valuable opportunity for the United Nations and other relevant international agencies to take a closer look at a number of current suggestions for innovative fund-raising mechanisms, including proposals for currency-transaction tax arrangements. Serious and rigorous assessment of concrete ideas of that kind represents an essential task for the United Nations and for the international community in seeking to translate the goals and principles of Copenhagen into reality for people in all parts of the world.

With those remarks, it only remains for me to reaffirm the attachment of Norway and of Canada to the Copenhagen commitments, and, in the light of the progress achieved during this special session, to pledge our continued cooperation with the international community in pursuing the goal of social development and social justice for all.

Mr. Farid (Bangladesh): Let me congratulate you, Mr. President, on the success of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly on the five-year review of the World Summit for Social Development. Bangladesh welcomes the consensus reached, through collective efforts and will, to carry forward the principles of social development identified at the Copenhagen Summit five years ago. We consider today's outcome to be our map to chart the future course of social development in order to fulfil the Copenhagen commitments as soon as possible.

As coordinator of the least developed countries, Bangladesh particularly welcomes the commitments that we made together here to support the least developed countries in their social-development efforts. We look forward to carrying this forward through the third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, to be held next year.

We would like to thank the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee, Ambassador Maquieira of Chile, and all other members of the Bureau, the facilitators, the members of the Secretariat involved throughout the process, and our negotiating partners for all their efforts and for their commitment to achieving success.

One final point needs to be mentioned: in the outcome document's references to the impact of globalization on social development, we would have welcomed a more explicit reference to the need to address the gender impact of globalization. We believe that, as a first step, the United Nations Development Fund for Women should begin monitoring that impact.

Mr. Petit (France) (*spoke in French*): It is my honour to address the Assembly on behalf of the European Union. The following countries associate themselves with this statement: Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Poland, Romania and

Slovenia, along with the associated countries Cyprus, Malta and Turkey.

Five years after the Copenhagen World Summit for Social Development, the representatives of Governments, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, the media and all segments of civil society have come together once more, in Geneva, to assess the results of the Summit and to adopt new initiatives. As the title of the session indicates, the purpose is to achieve social development for all in a globalized world.

As the special session comes to a close, the European Union expresses its satisfaction at the results we have attained. It has been possible to make progress on many crucial issues of social development. The assessment set out in part two of the final document accurately reflects developments since Copenhagen in the context of globalization, with all the risks and opportunities it brings. The weaknesses that have been noted have given rise to a number of proposals for the future, such as new initiatives on the poorest countries. The positive side of our balance sheet will encourage us to move forward on the ratification of existing major social-development instruments and on engendering a dynamic in formulating national strategies to combat poverty.

In the declaration we reaffirm our political will both as individual States and as an international community to make further progress in the implementation of Copenhagen. The declaration clearly restates the essential conditions needed for social development. It refers to all the elements of good governance, and I should note here our disappointment that it proved impossible to make explicit reference to that concept, whereas good governance is seen as a necessary concept in most forums that discuss development.

The outcome document supplements the Copenhagen document by referring explicitly and unequivocally to the International Labour Organization Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, which is an important element in the pursuit of social development. Our outcome document acknowledges the need for coordinated follow-up to all major conferences and summits, and it calls upon Governments to forge close ties among social, economic and environmental policies, gender equality and the advancement and participation of women. The declaration also invites us to develop innovative initiatives for alleviating debt, by stressing equitable and sustainable approaches. A consensus was also reached on new initiatives that bring up to date and complete the Copenhagen Programme of Action.

The European Union particularly welcomes the progress that was achieved on six points.

First, we have set an ambitious objective of cutting in half the percentage of people living in extreme poverty, stressing the necessary links between social and macroeconomic policies.

Secondly, we have reached an agreement on a strong reference to the ratification of fundamental conventions of the International Labour Organization (ILO). These conventions are an essential instrument for promoting respect for workers' rights, social dialogue and, most simply, respect for the human person. Moreover, several new initiatives strengthen the role of the ILO in the framework of its mandate. This should contribute to dissipating concerns that have been expressed regarding the risk of using social standards as a tool of protectionism.

Thirdly, we have recognized the role of businesses in social development, while being concerned to encourage them to show social responsibility.

Fourthly, we have registered interesting progress in good practices in social policies. At the end of the debate we see clearly that the United Nations system must support national efforts to better implement and disseminate these practices.

Fifthly, there has been strong consensus on the major issue of access to health care, including by seeking to improve access to essential medicines at affordable prices. We have better defined the contribution of health to social development. The struggle against AIDS and the major pandemics has become a priority task.

Sixthly, we have noted the need to establish participatory mechanisms to evaluate the social impact of structural adjustment programmes, in cooperation with all the international institutions concerned.

All of these points are new and deserved mention. We would also like to express four regrets.

First, perhaps we did not go far enough on the question of cooperation between the major

international organizations in what is fundamentally at stake in social development and the social implications of globalization.

Secondly, we would have wished the session to be more ambitious regarding follow-up procedures and social indicators, even if we have made a modest beginning on an approach of synthesis and harmonization. We cannot evaluate social development without a common approach based on agreed indicators. Moreover, we feel that a more precise approach to the guiding principles and good practices in the field of social development would have been useful. This might have represented a considerable step forward.

Thirdly, it would doubtless have been useful to have given greater consideration to social protection, which will be of great importance in the next 20 years. The analysis of recent financial crises shows to what extent social protection can contribute to minimizing the negative social effects of economic crises.

Fourthly, we would also have wished to have stronger, more imaginative and more dynamic references to partnership with all components of civil society, and to social dialogue as well. The initiative taken by the Secretary-General, now known as the Global Compact, deserved mention. We nonetheless remain confident, since we see that throughout the world civil society is developing and diversifying.

This is not the end of our work. There is still a long way to go to combat inequalities and to eradicate poverty. Aware of our responsibilities to future generations, we are strongly committed to the principles of social justice and of social development for all in an ever more globalized economy.

The President: I give the floor to Nigeria.

Mr. Aliyu (Nigeria): I am taking the floor on behalf of the Group of 77 and China to congratulate you, Sir, on the task you have just accomplished. Indeed, we were confident from the outset that you were going to guide us to a successful outcome. Given the difficulties faced in some aspects of the negotiation process, we can only express our appreciation for your able leadership, without which we would have been stuck.

In this regard, I would like to seize this opportunity once more to place on the record our gratitude to the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee, Ambassador Maquieira, who guided us through the preparatory process, and to Ambassadors Asadi and Richelle, who chaired the Working Groups. We thank them for their commitment and contributions to the success of this special session. Let me also thank our negotiating partners for the flexibility and understanding they showed in the negotiations.

Although we were not able to agree on all the matters that were of serious concern to us, we are confident that the outcome document will provide a springboard for further and increased efforts, at the national and international levels, to ensure and promote social development for all.

Finally, we would like to thank the Government and the hospitable people of Switzerland, our gracious hosts. As for the Secretariat staff — what would we have done without them?

The President: I give the floor to the observer of the Holy See.

Mr. Frontiero (Holy See): The Holy See takes note of the progress that has been made in these past months in the preparatory process for this special session, and praises the efforts of the international community. In this, the Holy See thanks the Secretariat and the members of the Bureau for their tireless efforts, which have resulted in the adoption of this outcome document, and it welcomes the consensus.

In offering this statement of interpretation, the Holy See wishes to note that nothing it has done in this process should be understood or interpreted as an endorsement of concepts that the Holy See cannot accept for moral reasons. In conformity with its nature and its particular mission, by welcoming the adoption of the final document of the twenty-fourth special session, the Holy See wishes to express its understanding of it.

First, the Holy See reaffirms the reservations it expressed at the conclusion of the recent United Nations world conferences and summits, as well as the statements of interpretation made at the end of the special sessions of the General Assembly for the review and implementation of those conferences and summits.

Secondly, regarding the terms "sexual and reproductive health", the Holy See considers these terms as applying to a holistic concept of health, which embraces the person in the entirety of his or her

personality, mind and body, and which fosters the achievement of his or her personality and personal maturity in sexuality and in the mutual love and decision-making that characterize the conjugal relationship in accordance with moral norms. The Holy See does not consider abortion or access to abortion as a dimension of these terms. Nor does the Holy See endorse any form of legislation that gives legal recognition to abortion.

Thirdly, the Holy See's agreement to the use of the term "family planning" should in no way be interpreted as constituting a change in its well-known position concerning those family-planning methods that the Catholic Church considers morally unacceptable, or concerning family-planning services that do not respect the liberty of spouses, human dignity and the human rights of those concerned.

Fourthly, with reference to all international agreements, in particular to any existing agreements mentioned in this document, the Holy See maintains its position in this regard, consistent with the Holy See's acceptance or non-acceptance of them.

Fifthly, the Holy See reaffirms that the education of young people — including children, girls, boys, adolescents, young women, or young men — including education regarding sexual and reproductive health, is primarily and fundamentally the right, duty and responsibility of parents, in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, article 26, paragraph 3:

> "Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children."

The President: I give the floor to the observer of Switzerland.

Mr. Anderegg (Switzerland): On behalf of my Government, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, and the Assembly, for having accepted our invitation to meet in Geneva.

This has been the first time ever that a session of the General Assembly convened in Geneva in its entirety. The goal of this session was to take the next step in social development. That step has been taken, even though we had hoped for a more marked leap forward in this crucial process. We all know that many further efforts will be needed on our way towards a world free of poverty. The step taken here at Geneva this week was made possible thanks to a spirit of cooperation among Governments.

We have all benefited greatly from the outstanding commitment and professionalism of the United Nations Secretariat, Under-Secretary-General Desai's team — Mr. John Langmore and Mrs. Gloria Kan — Under-Secretary-General Jin's team and the entire staff of the Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services and of the Security and Safety Service, as well as many others. It has been a privilege for us to work closely with these outstanding and dedicated people, who have shown great competence in providing a framework conducive to our work.

Let me also express our high respect and gratitude to the Chairman for the preparatory process and of the Committee of the Whole, Ambassador Maquieira, for an excellent job. We express our thanks for his extraordinary negotiating skills. Our thanks also go to all the other members of the Bureau and the facilitators of the Working Groups.

Switzerland has been honoured by the quality and the level of participation, both from Governments and from civil society. We hope participants were satisfied with the facilities and the platform provided for the dialogue, the Geneva 2000 Forum, even though of course many of you were, for obvious reasons, unable to participate there.

Switzerland and its beloved Geneva have been honoured and delighted to receive you here. We wish you all a happy return to your families.

The President: We have thus concluded our consideration of agenda items 8 and 9.

Closing statement by the President

The President: I believed all along that we would do it; and we have succeeded in Geneva as well. I also said that we were not going to renegotiate the outcome positions and commitments made in Copenhagen in 1995 towards sustainable social development and human security. We cannot go backwards. We must move forward in earnest and meet the time-bound targets that were set at Copenhagen to make this a better world for all.

In all, we heard a total of 180 speakers in plenary meeting: 159 United Nations Members States, two non-member States, 10 observers and 9 non-governmental

organizations. Speaker after speaker reaffirmed the complementary roles of Government, the private sector, non-governmental organizations and other civil society operators necessary if human advancement and social justice are ever going to be sustainable and satisfactory to everyone.

With all this in mind, we have just adopted this important document entitled "Proposals for further initiatives for social development". The list of renewed commitments is led by our deep-seated concerns about economic growth and democratization, full employment, debt cancellation, women's empowerment, gender equality, and multilateral trade based on social justice and equity.

We stand, especially today, in the face of the worst enemy in the world, namely, HIV/AIDS. Apart from nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, this disease, AIDS, represents a near and present danger to the survival of humanity. It is actually not a disease, but a human disaster. AIDS defies borders and spares nobody on account of race, creed, generation or gender. Infectious diseases, as science and technology teach us, are preventable and in fact, in some cases, curable. However, politics and greed stand in the way of saving lives.

Last year's 13 million deaths from infectious maladies could have been prevented at a cost of $5 per person. In sub-Saharan Africa it is estimated that over 23 million people are infected with HIV, representing 70 per cent of the global total. Over 90 per cent of infected Africans are unaware they carry HIV. Fifty-five per cent of infected adults are women, while girls aged between 15 and 19 are six times more likely to be infected than boys. This makes Africa, my continent, a special case. But who really are Africans? Africans are all of you. Information abounds that basic health care has been sacrificed for economic restructuring in many developing countries. A World Bank survey of 53 countries showed a 15 per cent average decline in health spending per person following structural adjustment programmes.

Talking about human suffering, I want to repeat once again: hands off women, children and United Nations peacemakers, peacekeepers and life savers everywhere they serve humanity. Their persecutors and those who hold them hostage by force must not be shown any mercy. These criminals must face the full weight of the law. Let us summon all of the necessary political will, mobilize the requisite resources and focus on people-centred priorities to eradicate poverty, hunger, want and fear from the face of the earth once and for all.

Compassion, generosity and sharing are noble human virtues, and they should govern human relations. I reiterate what I said at the start of this special session: that those fortunate countries that benefited from early industrialization and are now in an ideal position to profit immensely from globalization should acknowledge and assume their responsibilities towards the least fortunate that accompany their power and great fortune.

From 51 in 1945, we are now 188 United Nations Member States. Others are on the way as of September 2000. This means contending with numbers, demographic volatility and the many exigencies of United Nations official languages and the other languages that can be heard in the corridors. Because of this, we often miss deadlines, but, as the saying goes, all is well that ends well.

At the same time, let us plead for a change of heart, so that we can in future avoid this usual but unacceptable gridlock between the industrialized countries and the developing countries.

The ballot box is best used on a full stomach. We the representatives of States must not ignore the voices of the non-governmental organizations and of others in civil society. We must heed their concerns and engage them in a dialogue. Some of those voices were raised here in Geneva, in response to the latest document, "A better world for all". They are now beginning to be part of us, and we must encourage them, listen to them, heed them and respond to their concerns.

In concluding, I would like to thank my Vice-Presidents for their loyalty and high sense of duty, as well as the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole, Ambassador Cristián Maquieira of Chile, and his devoted collaborators. It took sweat, tears and sleepless nights in New York and here in Geneva for them to produce this excellent text, which puts us in good stead to go forward and show results as we proceed.

United Nations officials and staff worked long and hard to ensure efficiency and good order. I thank Mr. Jin, Under-Secretary-General of the Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services,

Mr. Desai, and their dedicated aides, including Protocol and Liaison Service and security officers, both those from Headquarters and their colleagues here in Geneva, for their outstanding service.

Last but not least, I would like, on behalf of the Assembly, to thank once again the Swiss Government and people for their generous hospitality and for all of the assistance they have provided us to make this meeting a success.

All has now been said and done at this twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and further initiatives. It is time to leave this hallowed place of ideas, where we have recommitted ourselves to act.

We have now come to the end of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly. I invite representatives to stand and observe one minute of silent prayer or meditation.

The members of the General Assembly observed a minute of silent prayer or meditation.

Closure of the twenty-fourth special session

The President: I declare closed the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly.

The meeting rose at 4.35 p.m.